

DPR Water Conservation Highlights: August 2015

Three Projects Lead to Significant Water Savings at Collier County Park

In May, the County of San Diego Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) launched a project to remove thousands of feet of turf at Collier County Park in Ramona, replacing grass with natural landscaping and contributing to a noteworthy 66 percent reduction in irrigated water use, park-wide.

The turf removal project was managed by DPR staff, with contracted help from a team of California Conservation Corps (CCC) workers.

The first step was to remove the existing grass with a sod cutter – a process that took two full days. Nine irrigation stations, 53 sprinkler heads and eight single-use BBQ stations were also removed.



Next, French drain systems were installed around the covered pavilion, and 350 cubic yards of decomposed granite was laid, raked and compacted in designated areas. It took 21 CCC workers five days to tackle these projects, with leadership and assistance from Park Attendants Kent Drake and Keith Van Sickle.

River rocks, boulders, trees, shrubs and other native vegetation were placed in key locations, to assist with drainage and to contribute to the park's overall aesthetic appeal.

Plants were harvested from the garden on site, in partnership with the Ramona Garden Club. The DPR Tree Committee arranged to bring in 50 young native trees including Live Oaks, Sycamores, Torrey Pines and Toyons.

"This has been a collaborative effort, and we've received very positive feedback so far," said Kent Drake, Park Attendant. "Ramona residents see this as *their* park. They know we are conserving for future generations."

Other water conservation projects at Collier include a limited watering schedule for the east lawn – from three days a week to two, and for a shorter span of time – and the installation of low-flow fixtures in all park restrooms.

"Kent and Keith have a sense of pride in the work they are doing to improve this park and to meet the department's water conservation goals," said Jane Engleton, Supervising Park Ranger. "They've put in many hours, and it's easy to see that their hard work is paying off."



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Initial estimates by DPR staff put projected water savings at around 45 percent, which was already higher than the 28-percent reduction mandated by the Ramona Municipal Water Agency.

When Cal-sense, the company that operates the park's smart irrigation system, ran numbers for May through July, results indicated an average water savings of 66 percent – much better than the 28-percent reduction that is mandated by the Ramona Municipal Water Agency.

Updates like these are just one part of a larger Water Conservation Plan, aimed at decreasing water consumption and related costs at County parks and facilities. Evolving every day, the plan will continue to hone in on smart technologies and practices that maximize water savings potential. Get updates and follow progress on www.sdparks.org/droughtinfo.

